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Letter dated 15 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, I. S. Ivanov, addressed to the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), M. Geoana, concerning the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 74, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sergey **Lavrov**

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Annex to the letter dated 15 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Message to His Excellency, Mr. M. Geoana, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania and Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

12 November 2001

Two years have passed since the holding of the OSCE Istanbul Summit, at which the Agreement on Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was signed and the Final Act of the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty was adopted, documents which should ensure greater security and stability on the European continent. The joint statement of the Russian Federation and Georgia of 17 November 1999 concerning the duration and modalities for the fulfilment by the parties of the conditions laid down in the adapted CFE Treaty and for regulating bilateral ties in the military field was annexed to the Final Act.

We can note with satisfaction that the key obligations set forth in the statement have been carried out by the Russian side. The remaining Russian weapons and equipment in the territory of Georgia subject to the limitations under the CFE Treaty were withdrawn from that country in good time, that is, prior to 31 December 2000, and also partially disposed of on the spot. This process was carried out under conditions of transparency with the monitoring of international inspectors. The Russian side brought the quantitative levels of its weapons in Georgia into accordance with the adapted Treaty even before its entry into force and, thereby, made an important contribution to the preparation of the conditions for its ratification by the States parties.

The disbanding and withdrawal from Georgia of the Russian military bases at Vaziani and Gudauta were completed within the context of bilateral Russian-Georgian agreements. In view of the fact that the Gudauta Russian military base was situated in the area of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, the redeployment of the base's personnel and stores involved particular difficulties. The population of Abkhazia, Georgia, protested against the departure of the Russian military personnel, considering their presence in Gudauta a security guarantee in case of a resumption of the Georgian-Abkhaz armed conflict.

In spite of its obligation under the Istanbul statement to "facilitate the creation of the conditions necessary for reducing and withdrawing the Russian forces", Georgia did not provide assistance to the Russian side in connection with the withdrawal of the Gudauta military base. In supporting Chechen and international terrorists, the Georgian side provoked fighting in Abkhazia, Georgia, which, of course, has further complicated efforts to reach an agreement with Sukhumi. Nevertheless, with the assistance of the Abkhaz authorities at the beginning of November 2001, the personnel and stores of the former Russian military base in Gudauta were withdrawn to the Russian Federation.

At the present time, only the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeepers are in Gudauta since they are continuing to use a number of facilities at the former military base in order to provide administrative and transport services

for the peacekeeping operation. The United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) has been monitoring this operation, in accordance with Security Council resolution 937 (1994) of 21 July 1994.

Thus, within the context of carrying out the bilateral obligations under the Istanbul statement, Moscow and Tbilisi have still to reach agreement on the duration and modalities of the functioning of the Russian military bases at Batumi and Akhalkalaki and the other Russian military facilities within the territory of Georgia. It should be borne in mind in this regard that the Russian side has still to carry out a considerable amount of construction work, find financial resources, and provide social protection to the servicemen and their family members returning to the Russian Federation. We believe that all these matters will be resolved in the appropriate manner.

(*Signed*) I. **Ivanov**